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HIROHITO

(Phonetic: heeroH-heetoh)

JAPAN

Emperor
(since 1926)

Addressed as:
Your Majesty



According to the Japanese Constitution, the Emperor, who heads the world's oldest ruling house, is the symbol of the state and the unity of the people. Some veteran political observers in Tokyo say that the Emperor may have saved the monarchy in Japan by his dignified, cooperative behavior after World War II: he has assisted greatly in the demilitarization of Japan by removing the association of the Emperor with military parades, which he never attends, and by not maintaining a military guard or personally greeting soldiers in uniform. The Japanese press reports that the Emperor has steadfastly held that he could not have prevented his country's military activities before and during World War II because he was bound by the Constitution's strictures on imperial authority in relation to the Cabinet. The Emperor and Empress visited the United States in 1975. (C)

According to officials in the imperial household who have been interviewed in the press, the Emperor is extremely shy. They report that he is mentally alert and has a sense of humor (he likes to wear a Mickey Mouse watch given to him at Disneyland in 1975). An accomplished marine biologist, the Emperor has written at least nine books on the subject and has discovered a type of Pacific crustacean that is named after him. In 1971 he was elected a full member of the British Royal Society for his scientific accomplishments. The above-mentioned officials say that he enjoys working in his marine biology laboratory more than engaging in state ceremonies. (C)

The Emperor is in good health for his age (82) and does not drink or smoke. He can read English with the aid of a dictionary, and he knows some French. He strongly prefers Western to Japanese food (he generally eats bacon and eggs for breakfast) and wears only Western clothing. He enjoys hiking with the Empress and watching traditional sumo wrestling on television. As a sign of respect, the Emperor's personal name is never used in conversation. The Emperor and Empress, who married in 1924, have five living children and 10 grandchildren. (U)

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

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